

## THE BIODIVERSITY OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

### NATURAL COMMUNITY TYPES

A natural community is "a distinct and recurring assemblage of populations of plants, animals, bacteria, and fungi naturally associated with each other and their physical environment" (Schafale and Weakley 1990). In this report, 28 natural communities were described in Montgomery County. In most cases, natural communities are the reason for site biological significance. Although on occasion sites are recognized as significant because they contain populations of rare species, most sites contain examples of one to several community types ranging in quality from fair to excellent. The significance of such sites is often augmented by, but not dependent on, the presence of rare species. The condition and extent of natural community types within a site usually has a strong influence on the overall significance of a site.

The exemplary natural communities known to occur in Montgomery County are listed in the table, Natural Communities of Montgomery County. Other types are probably present in Montgomery County, but have yet to be studied and classified. The rarity or commonness of the community types is ascertained from the global and state ranks in the table. A question mark in either a global or state rank indicates that the distribution of the community type is not yet fully known either rangewide (i.e., globally) or in the state. For additional information on these communities and their floristics from a statewide perspective, refer to Schafale and Weakley (1990).